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Help is phone call, Internet search away

Determining where to get help is first step

By Jane Adler

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It's easy to feel overwhelmed when the need for a different housing arrangement suddenly arises. A medical emergency can lead to a panicked hunt for a nursing home. The death of a spouse might make it necessary to find an affordable apartment.

Narrow a search by location first and then by type of building, experts recommend. If you don't know what type of building is best, a social service agency can help assess your needs.

No one local source catalogs every building in the area, so the search takes some legwork. Here are resources to help:

* AgeOptions (Area Agency on Aging of Suburban Cook County)

800-699-9043

<http://www.ageoptions.org>

Provides free customized lists from its database of seniors-only buildings in suburban Cook County, including affordable and market-rate properties. Also includes long-term care buildings: retirement, assisted living and nursing homes.

* Catholic Charities

312-655-7717

Housing referrals and counseling. Operates 16 affordable seniors-only buildings in Cook County.

* Center of Concern

847-823-0453

<http://www.centerofconcern.org>

Information on home-sharing, rental assistance, transitional housing and homelessness prevention. Call for a free list of apartments, retirement homes, nursing homes and assisted-living buildings in northwest suburbs.

* Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services <http://www.medicare.gov>

Online service that compares U.S. nursing homes. Under "search tools" click on "compare nursing homes in your area."

Site also provides details on quality measures, staffing and results of state inspections.

* Chicago Department of Housing

Call 311

<http://www.cityofchicago.org>

Find the Chicago Department of Housing's Web site under "Departments." Click on "Renters" then go to the Seniors Housing Resource List. Listed by neighborhood, buildings include affordable and market-rate apartments, nursing homes, assisted living and Section 8.

* [Chicago Housing Authority](#)

866-NEW-CHA1 (639-2421)

<http://www.thecha.org>

Call for a list of CHA buildings for low-income seniors and an apartment application or download an online application by clicking on "Applying for Housing." Or write CHA Occupancy Department, 60 E. Van Buren St., Chicago, IL 60605.

* CJE SeniorLife (formerly Council for Jewish Elderly)

773-508-1000

<http://www.cje.net>

Provides information about affordable buildings. Helps with application process. Group also has 10 seniors-only buildings: apartments, assisted living and a nursing home.

* DuPage County

630-407-6500

<http://www.dupageco.org>

Senior Services Department offers a free retirement housing directory. A list of nursing homes is also available.

Web site includes resource directory, contacts for social service agencies and a list of long-term care buildings in DuPage.

*Illinois Department on Aging

800-252-8966

<http://www.state.il.us/aging>

Information on in-home care, delivered meals, home repair, caregiver support and long-term care ombudsman.

* Illinois Department of Public Health

<http://www.idph.state.il.us>

Online listings of Illinois nursing homes. From home page, click on "topics list" and go to "nursing homes." Links to quarterly nursing home reports on quality of care.

*Illinois Housing Development Authority

800-942-8439

<http://www.ihda.org>

List of affordable apartment buildings financed by the agency. Call for a list or search online. Click on "statewide resources."

* Illinois Supportive Living Program <http://www.sfillinois.com>

List of assisted-living buildings in Illinois for low-income seniors.

* Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs

847-501-5760

<http://www.interfaithhousingcenter.org>

Call for free lists of Section 8 apartments and subsidized housing in northern suburbs. List of Illinois and U.S. home-sharing programs also available.

Also provides assistance with open-housing and predatory-lending problems. Handles landlord/tenant issues. Spanish and English-speaking counselors are available.

* Northeastern [Illinois](#) Area Agency on Aging

630-293-5990

800-528-2000

<http://www.ageguide.org>

Database lists senior housing in collar counties, including Lake, McHenry, Kane, DuPage, Kendall, Will, Grundy and Kankakee. Buildings include affordable and market-rate apartments, assisted living, nursing homes and continuing-care. Online search is available; from home page, click on "service locator."

* North Shore Senior Center

847-784-6040

<http://www.nssc.org>

Provides lists of appropriate housing based on individual requests. Call with area and type of building needed.

Covers retirement communities, nursing homes, apartments and home health-care agencies.

* Plows Council on Aging

708-361-0219

Housing referrals for Palos, Lemont, Orland and Worth Townships. Shared housing program. Call for information or e-mail info@plows.org.

* Senior Services Associates Inc.

<http://www.seniorservice> sassoc.org

McHenry County-McHenry

815-344-3555

McHenry County-[Crystal Lake](#)

815-356-7457

Kane County-Aurora

630-897-4035

Kane County-Elgin

847-741-0404

Kendall County

630-553-5777

Housing counseling and referral services. Call for lists of market-rate and subsidized seniors-only buildings. Information on senior companion programs, home-delivered meals, transportation, case management and respite programs.

* Senior Services of Will County

815-723-9713

<http://www.willcountyseniors.org>

Call for a list of housing for seniors in Will, Grundy and Kankakee Counties. Listings include subsidized buildings, assisted living, continuing care and nursing homes. Data are not online.

* [Waukegan](#) Township Park Place Senior Center

847-244-9242

<http://www.waukegantownship.com>

List of subsidized apartments in Lake County for low-income seniors. Contact information for housing authorities in Lake County. Transportation services and housing referrals.

Jane Adler is a Chicago-area freelance writer. Write to her at Senior Housing, c/o [Chicago Tribune](#) Real Estate, 435 N. [Michigan](#) Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Or e-mail real estate@tribune.com. Sorry, she cannot make personal replies. Answers will be supplied only through the newspaper.

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